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THE FLAG*

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behind, however great the fatigue  
might be. Yet  
who could tell whether these poor  
people were j  
not marching to a last  
disappointment, to the :  
shattering of their last hope ?

They resumed their journey towards  
the peak,  
which now was about half a mile  
away. Every  
step was difficult, and progress was  
painfully  
slow among the hundreds of rocks which  
must be.  
scrambled over or gone round. It  
was more  
like a chamois track than a footpath.  
The boat-  
swain insisted on carrying little Bob, and  
his mother  
gave the child to him. Fritz and  
Jenny, Frank  
and Dolly, and James and Susan kept  
near to-  
gether, that the men might help the  
women over  
the dangerous bits.

It was past two o'clock in the  
afternoon when\*  
the base of the cone was reached.  
They had  
taken three hours to cover less than a  
mile and  
three quarters since the last  
halt. But they  
were obliged to rest again.

The stop was of short duration, and in  
twenty  
minutes the climbing began.

It had occurred to Captain Gould to  
go round  
the peak, to avoid a tiring climb.  
But its base  
, was seen to be impassable, and,

after all, the  
height was not great.

At the outset the foot found hold  
upon a soil  
where scanty plants were growing,  
clumps of  
stoaecrops to which the fingers could  
cling.